

What
MUHAMMAD
Said about
JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

JESUS IS A UNIQUE FIGURE IN HUMAN history. His words and deeds inspire many, and his life continues to fascinate and raise questions. So, it comes as no surprise that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, would mention him. But what might surprise many is how often Jesus is mentioned, and what Muhammad had to say about him. This book collects these sayings in an attempt to understand the place of Jesus and Mary in Islam from the mouth of Muhammad himself.

The range of these sayings takes us through the pivotal moments in Jesus' life, from his birth to the end of time. We witness the virtue of Mary and the Immaculate Birth, and get a glimpse of Jesus' ministry and the critical moments before his rise to the heavens, then are told of Jesus' Second Coming, and end with Jesus as a key figure in events on the Day of Judgment. All of this with such attention to details as to describe the looks of Jesus and what he will be wearing on his

second visit to earth. Jesus emerges from these sayings as an important religious and historic personality, with great significance for the future.

The importance of this topic stems from one of the major dilemmas facing our world today: How do we understand a religion or a religious community that is not our own, and how can we escape the trap of emotional judgments and stereotypes, and cut through layers of suspicion to reach the truth? Much of the friction between religions today is fuelled by historical and contemporary misunderstandings, further complicated by religious, political, and economic rivalries; the misunderstandings obscure reality, while the rivalries breed unjust treatment of others. And it is only through the pursuit of truth and justice that we can ever have hope of bringing peace to this earth. It is puzzling how many of us in the world today demand justice yet fail to be just, and how much we struggle for acceptance and understanding yet fail to accept others.

If we accept the maxim that we should treat others as we would like to be treated, then we should understand them as we would like them to understand us, and be fair to them as we would like that they be fair to us. So, to truly understand a religion we ought to hear what it says about itself in its own words, not what others say about it. Then proceed to judge it, if

we were to judge, with standards that we don't mind applying to ourselves. Thus is the importance of presenting the actual sayings of Muhammad in this book.

Since these sayings address a host of issues, the book discusses several important beliefs in Islam and includes relevant verses from the Quran, the Muslim scripture, for further elaboration. Whenever the Quran is quoted, its verses are in italics, followed by brackets that include the chapter and verse number. The glossary serves as a quick guide of key terms discussed in this book. It is hoped that this book will not only offer its reader a better understanding of the place of Jesus and Mary in Islam, but also a richer understanding of the Muslim faith in general.

This book collects thirty sayings of Muhammad and three sayings of his companions, arranged in seven chapters with some commentary. The format followed here resembles what can be found in classic *Hadeeth* books.

What is a "Hadeeth"?

A *Hadeeth* or *Hadeeths* (pl.) is Arabic for what Muhammad said and did. It is considered part of what God revealed to Muhammad, and its importance cannot be understated in all aspects of Muslim life.

What follows, and is indented, is a brief background of Hadeeth. If it is found to be too technical, the reader can comfortably skim over it, as it is not essential to the rest of the book.

Short history of Hadeeth

When Muhammad said or did something, it got reported to the person who did not witness it through a middleman, or a narrator. Then that person reported to it another, and so on. Hence, each Hadeeth came with its own set or chain of narrators.

Then, each Hadeeth was examined based on the reliability and credibility of its narrators. If all the narrators were found to be of good character and memory, then the Hadeeth would be accepted as an authentic report of Muhammad. But if a flaw were found in the narrators, the Hadeeth would be labeled as weak.

Are there any weak Hadeeths in this book?

Only authentic Hadeeths have been included in this book, and the weak ones have been excluded. The last chapter has three sayings from two of the companions of Muhammad,

which are not technically Hadeeths, but they will be referred to as such in this book for the sake of simplicity. The chain of narrators, which usually accompanies every Hadeeth, has been omitted entirely for the sake of simplicity too.

Why only authentic Hadeeths?

Weak Hadeeths are not reliable and cannot be attributed with certainty to Muhammad. What is attributed to Muhammad is valid only if it is authentic. This is a point worthy of remembering when reading Islamic literature, as many fail to make the distinction between authentic and non-authentic Hadeeths. If the Hadeeth is unreliable, Muslims usually do not follow it.

Where do I find Hadeeths?

The words and deeds of Muhammad, or Hadeeth, are collected in countless volumes and arranged in a variety of ways. There are six main Hadeeth books, but by no means do they exhaust all of the sayings and actions of Muhammad. The most famous of them are *Saheeh al-Bukhaari* and *Saheeh Muslim*.

Jesus, peace be upon them. Implicit in this divine protection from the devil and his influence is the confirmation of the chastity of Mary and the Immaculate Conception, which the Quran explicitly confirms (3:45-48; 19:16-33). God further protected Jesus by saving him from those who wanted to kill him; see Hadeeth (30) and commentary on Hadeeth (5).

2. "God ordered John son of Zechariah to observe five commands and to order the children of Israel to observe them. Then it is as if he procrastinated, so God revealed to Jesus, 'Either he conveys them or you do.' So Jesus went to John and said, 'You were ordered to observe five commands and to order the children of Israel to observe them. So, either you convey them or I do.' So John said, 'O spirit of God, I fear that if you do it before me that I would be punished or that the earth would collapse under me.' So John gathered the children of Israel in the Jerusalem Mosque until it was full and he sat on the balcony, and he thanked God and praised Him and then said, 'Indeed God

ordered me to observe five commands and to order you to observe them. (1) The first is that you worship God and take no partners with Him. For the one who takes a partner with God is like a man who buys a slave with his own money, with gold or silver, then gives him a house to live in and says, 'Work and give back to me.' So the slave works and gives to someone other than his master. So, which of you would like his slave to be like that! And God is the One who created you and provided for you, so worship Him and take no partners with Him. (2) And I order you to pray. And when you stand to pray, do not turn your faces away, for God faces his servant when he prays as long as he does not turn away. (3) And I order you to fast. For fasting is like one who has a bundle of musk in a company of men, and all of them love its smell. And indeed the smell of the fasting person is sweeter to God than the smell of musk. (4) And I order you to give charity. For charity is like one who was captured by the enemy, and they tied his hands to his neck and were about to kill him, so he said to them, 'Can I ransom myself from you?' And he paid